

Kisharon Centre

**Inspection of FEFC-funded provision in
non-sector establishments for students with
learning difficulties and/or disabilities**

July 2000

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
1999-00**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to secure provision for individual students in England with learning difficulties and/or disabilities where sector provision is inadequate. When it exercises this duty, the Council makes a contract with the establishment making the provision. The contract includes the right of inspection.

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council circulars 97/12, 97/13 and 97/22. Inspections seek to validate the data and judgements provided by institutions in self-assessment reports. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge of and experience in the work they inspect.

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GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are set out in the Council Circulars 97/12 and 97/22. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and other aspects of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use a five-point scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptors for the grades are:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| <i>grade 1</i> | <i>- outstanding provision which has many strengths and few weaknesses</i> |
| <i>grade 2</i> | <i>- good provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses</i> |
| <i>grade 3</i> | <i>- satisfactory provision with strengths but also some weaknesses</i> |
| <i>grade 4</i> | <i>- less than satisfactory provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths</i> |
| <i>grade 5</i> | <i>- poor provision which has few strengths and many weaknesses</i> |

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Summary

Independent Establishment 18/00

Inspection of FEFC-Funded Provision in non-sector establishments for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Kisharon Centre for Further Education and Vocational Training, London

Inspected July 2000

Kisharon Further and Vocational Education Centre, in the London Borough of Barnet, provides further and vocational education for young orthodox Jewish people with learning difficulties. The provision aims to teach the social and life skills needed by students to progress to higher level courses or into employment, and to lead more fulfilled lives. Vocational skills are taught through carpentry, goldblocking, textiles and bookbinding. Students are between 16 and 25 years old and have moderate or severe learning difficulties. There is a separate unit for autistic young people. At the time of the inspection, three of the 35 students at the college were funded by the FEFC.

At the time of the previous inspection the centre, which enables students' to learn in an orthodox Jewish environment, had been open for two years and work was at an early stage of development. Considerable progress has been made since that time. Religious education and training remains of a particularly high quality for men students and has improved for women students. Men students' participation in orthodox Jewish services

remains outstanding, even though the centre now admits students with severe learning difficulties. Students achieve high levels of competence in the rules and duties of orthodox Jewish adult life. Students achieve good levels of communication and independent living skills which enable them to succeed on higher level courses and be more fully included in family and community life. Effective teaching of vocational subjects results in students gaining a range of skills for work. Opportunities for students to have more successful adult lives are maximised through the effective teaching of acceptable social behaviour. Teachers provide strong individual support for students. Music therapy for autistic students is outstanding.

However, some lessons do not fully meet students' learning needs and, although students' individual learning programmes have been further developed, they still lack overall coherent goals. The recording of students' achievements is incomplete. The college is aware that some accommodation is not suitable for teaching and learning.

The self-assessment report, the first produced by the centre, is appropriate for the size of the centre and the amount of work funded by the FEFC. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement of the quality of its work, but identified some different key strengths and weaknesses. The work funded by the FEFC was judged to be good, with strengths outweighing weaknesses, and was awarded a grade 2.

Context

The Establishment and its mission

1 Kisharon Further and Vocational Education Centre, in the London Borough of Barnet, provides further and vocational education for young orthodox Jewish people with learning difficulties. The provision aims to teach the social and life skills needed by orthodox Jewish adults to progress to higher level courses or into employment, and to lead more fulfilled lives. Students are between 16 and 25 years old and have moderate or severe learning difficulties. The provision for students with severe learning difficulties has been added since the previous inspection.

2 The main centre is in the grounds of a synagogue in the London Borough of Barnet. There is a separate unit on another site for autistic young people. Plans are well underway for the refurbishment of a former convent, which will replace the current site and provide improved accommodation and facilities for the centre. At the time of inspection, three of the 35 students at the college were funded by the FEFC.

3 Pre-vocational and vocational skills are taught through carpentry, goldblocking, textiles and bookbinding. Students receive a comprehensive religious education and practice religious observance daily.

The inspection

4 Two inspectors carried out the inspection over three days. They observed 17 lessons, held meetings with managers and talked informally with students and staff. Students' work and college documentation, including students' files, were examined.

5 The self-assessment report, the first undertaken by the college, was produced from contributions from all staff. It avoids unnecessary detail, with evidence provided for the judgements made. Although the report did not identify all the key strengths and many of the weaknesses identified by inspectors, they were in general agreement with the college's assessment of the overall quality of its FEFC-funded work. The report includes a detailed action plan.

Curriculum

Grade profile of lessons observed

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Number of lessons	2	8	5	2	0

6 Inspectors agreed with the centre's judgement that much teaching is good and little is unsatisfactory. In an effective woodworking lesson students worked on individual projects. They were expected to remain on task, show initiative, work co-operatively and monitor the quality of their own work. In music therapy, students with severe intellectual impairments and communication difficulties responded to rhythms and to simple language. In the most effective lessons group activities were adapted to meet individual needs, the pace of work was varied to maintain interest and teachers were able to make changes if it became clear that a particular activity or approach was not succeeding.

7 The teaching and practice of religious observance is outstanding for men students and has improved for women students. Men students on the main site take part in morning prayers in the synagogue. Some are now very competent and those with severe learning difficulties participate to the full extent of their abilities. Students observed on the previous inspection had made appreciable progress in their ability to participate and understand the requirements of religious observance. Autistic students are expected to take part in a modified act of prayer. This strength is evidenced in the self-assessment report.

8 In some weaker lessons students' learning needs are not fully met. Sometimes the content is inappropriate and students are faced with tasks which are beyond their comprehension. Sometimes, tasks are made more complicated than they need to be, or are unnecessary for the achievement of a particular lesson aim. Some over-intervention by staff hampers students' learning, or misleads them into thinking that students have accomplished more than is really the case. In some lessons the requirements of the award scheme chosen to accredit students' achievements are at odds with the students' learning needs. The college did not identify these weaknesses in the self-assessment report.

9 Students of all levels of ability learn skills that will enable them to succeed on higher level courses and lead more independent adult lives. Students achieve good levels of communication and independent living skills which enable them to succeed on higher level courses and be more fully included in family and community life. Effective teaching of vocational subjects results in students gaining a range of skills for work. Opportunities for students to lead more successful adult lives are maximised through the effective teaching of acceptable social behaviour. The centre is aware of these strengths and identified them through the self-assessment process.

Curriculum

10 Students' achievements in goldblocking, printing and laminating are impressive. Articles produced are of commercial standard and are sold locally.

11 Although students individual learning programmes have been developed further since the previous inspection, they still lack overall coherent goals. The recording of students' achievements is incomplete, as the centre is not yet setting precise goals against which achievement can be measured. This was partially identified in the self-assessment report.

Other Aspects of Provision

12 Teachers provide high levels of individual attention and support for students. Students are well known as individuals and many aspects of their programmes are matched to their specific needs and interests.

13 Since the last inspection the accommodation, which was less than ideal, has become increasingly cramped. The layout of some rooms restricts or interferes with learning. The accommodation which has been created for students with severe learning difficulties is too separate from that used by other students and is not of a sufficiently high standard. The separation of autistic students does not allow them to have contact with other students who could provide role models for more acceptable behaviour. The centre is aware of these weaknesses and plans are well underway for the refurbishment of a former convent, which will replace the current sites and provide improved accommodation and facilities for all students at the centre.

14 Resources for learning are consistently good. Good-quality materials are used for vocational subjects. Sufficient teachers are employed for students to be taught individually or in small groups.

15 Although there is no explicit quality assurance policy to co-ordinate and inform quality assurance procedures, aspects of quality assurance practice are carried out and there are year-on-year improvements in quality.

16 The college does not have a system for finding out the destinations

and careers of leavers and therefore cannot use this information to inform the curriculum.

17 Management of the centre is clear and lines of communication are well established. Some post holders operate across both the centre and Kisharon day school. Where this occurs, post holders and other members of staff understand the way in which elements of the role fit together.

18 Governors, who are trustees of the charity, are committed to the success of the centre and take an interest in all aspects of its work.

Conclusions

19 Key strengths

- good students' achievements in communication and independent living skills
- outstanding religious teaching and observance
- good teaching and good students' achievements in skills for work
- thorough teaching of acceptable social behaviour
- strong individual support for students
- outstanding music therapy for autistic students

20 Weaknesses

- failure of some lessons to fully meet students' learning needs
- some unsuitable accommodation
- lack of overall coherent goals in individual learning programmes
- incomplete recording of students' achievements